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Attorney General Biden Takes Action to Protect Children Online

Wilmington, DE – Attorney General Beau Biden today announced that social networking website Facebook has agreed to implement changes that better protect children. Facebook will make several design and functionality changes to protect its users from predators and from inappropriate content, and will educate children, parents, and educators about ways to use its site safely. The agreement with Facebook was reached by Attorneys General from 49 states and the District of Columbia.

“Predators who would harm our kids take advantage of the popularity of social networking websites to reach their victims,” Attorney General Biden stated. “This agreement represents another step in the fight to enhance protections on these sites and keep kids safe online.”

As a result of today’s agreement, Facebook will take several actions, including:

- Provide automatic warning messages when a child is in danger of providing personal information to an unknown adult
- Restrict the ability of users to change their listed age
- Act aggressively to remove inappropriate content and groups from the site
- Require third party vendors to follow Facebook’s safety and privacy guidelines
- Participate in a task force that is working to develop online age and identity verification tools

Additionally, Facebook staff will now review a user’s request to change their listed age to determine whether it is appropriate. Facebook will maintain a list of pornographic websites and will sever links to such sites. It will also remove individuals and groups for committing pedophilia, cyberbullying, and other violations of its terms of service.

Facebook will also prominently display safety tips and require users under 18 to affirm that they have read them when they create Facebook profiles. Today’s agreement follows a similar agreement that Attorney General Biden and other state Attorneys General reached with social networking website MySpace in January, 2008.

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